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ABSTRACT

This volume, fourth in a series, is devoted to a study of the depression years of the 1930s, a crucial period in the history of the Hispanic land-grant-villages. It places northern New Mexico in a broad regional and national context, examining the major currents of social and political thought in American society that influenced Hispanic New Deal programs. During the Depression, the land reform villages had experienced grant land alienation, environmental degradation, and the contraction of economic opportunities, all of which combined to create a life-threatening crisis. The New Deal's emergency relief programs saved the Hispanic villages from outright starvation and set into motion social and economic changes that shaped these communities as we know them today. The national political arena and the philosophies of Anglo-American New Deal administrators are discussed. The study examines the inherent, conflicting goals of the New Deal: preserving the cooperative village values and Hispanic American culture while developing a modern economy. The New Deal emphasis on native crafts, revitalized agriculture, and communitarian values ignored the area's inherent lack of economic resources and the increasing reliance on technology in the larger culture. The New Deal's ultimate failure is demonstrated by the termination of programs and surviving economic realities in the villages, including dwindling resources and hardships associated with rural decline. This book contains a bibliographic essay, an index, maps, and photographs. (TES)

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